

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4557
INFO USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 3128

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PL, GE

SUBJECT: POLISH- EAST GERMAN RELATIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED POLISH TOP- LEVEL VISIT TO THE GDR LAST WEEK POINTS UP WHAT IS HAILED HERE AS A " NEW STAGE" IN POLISH- GDR RELATIONS AND WHAT IN FACT SEEMS TO BE THE BEGINNING OF A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. FOR POLAND THIS RELATIONSHIP SERVES AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO DIFFICULTIES WITH WEST GERMANY AND HELPS PROVIDE A FURTHER ELEMENT OF INSURANCE THAT POLISH INTERESTS WILL NOT BE SACRIFICED IN THE EMERGING RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN THE FRG AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. IT ALSO PROVIDES CERTAIN OBVIOUS BILATERAL BENEFITS TO BOTH PARTNERS. THIS PARTNERSHIP SEEMS TO HAVE SUPERSEDED ANY IDEA OF A GENUINE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND IN POLISH EYES THE GDR, AFTER THE USSR, OCCUPIES A SPECIAL POSITION AMONG WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY

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2. THE VISIT LAST WEEK OF FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK AND PREMIER JAROSZEWICZ TO THE GDR WAS AN IMPORTANT EVENT IN POLAND' S RELATIONS WITH HER WESTERN NEIGHBOR. WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO DESCRIBE THE VISIT ITSELF, DETAILS OF WHICH, TOGETHER WITH SPEECHES OF THE LEADERS, WERE NO DOUBT REPORTED FULLY IN FBIS AND OTHER MEDIA, WE OFFER A FEW COMMENTS ON POLISH POLICY TOWARD EAST GERMANY FROM OUR PARTICULAR VANTAGE POINT.

3. THE VISIT RECEIVED UNUSUALLY HEAVY PRESS AND TV COVERAGE IN POLAND, AND THE FANFARE FAR SURPASSED THAT ASSOCIATED WITH ANY OF GIEREK' S OTHER VISITS TO A WARSAW PACT COUNTRY SINCE HE CAME TO POWER. BOTH DURING HIS STAY IN THE GDR AND AGAIN IN HIS SPEECH TO THE NINTH CC PLENUM HERE ON JUNE 22, GIEREK SPOKE OF POLISH- GDR RELATIONS HAVING ENTERED A " NEW STAGE," AND WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THERE IS -- TO BORROW THE MARXIST PHRASEOLOGY -- A QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE, OR AT ANY RATE THE BEGINNINGS OF ONE, IN THE POLISH- GDR RELATIONSHIP THAT NOW SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING.

4. THE PERSONAL WARMTH DISPLAYED IN THE RELATIONS OF THE TWO PARTY LEADERS (THE PRESS HERE COMMENTED MORE THAN ONCE THAT GIEREK AND HONECKER WERE ON A FIRST- NAME BASIS) WOULD HAVE BEEN INCONCEIVABLE IN THE GOMULKA- ULBRICHT DAYS. MORE IMPORTANT, THE GIEREK- HONECKER RELATIONSHIP SYMBOLIZES AN APPARENT EFFORT TO DRAW THE TWO COUNTRIES TOGETHER INTO A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP THAN HAS EXISTED, OR HAS BEEN POSSIBLE , IN THE PAST. JUDGING BY PRESENT INDICATIONS, THIS RELATIONSHIP FOR POLAND WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE IDEA, SUPPOSEDLY IN VOGUE AT ONE TIME, OF A BALANCED, TRIANGULAR GROUPING INCLUDING CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

5. CURRENT POLISH POLICY TOWARD THE GDR, AS WE SEE IT,

DERIVES FROM A CERTAIN UNEASINESS OVER THE FRG' S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE USSR, AS WELL AS HER TREATIES WITH THE GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND THE FEELING -- WHICH WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE -- THAT IN THIS PROCESS POLAND MAY BE LEFT BEHIND. POLAND HAS HER PARTICULAR CONCERNS WITH THE FRG, AND AS GIEREK MADE CLEAR IN HIS POZNAN SPEECH IN MARCH AND AGAIN

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HERE ON JUNE 22, THE PROCESS OF " NORMALIZATION" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAS SOME DISTANCE TO GO. TO THIS MAY ALSO BE ADDED A NAGGING SUSPICION -- VOICED OPENLY TO US BY ONE POLISH COMMENTATOR ON GERMAN AFFAIRS, BUT PROBABLY NOT CONFINED TO HIM -- THAT AS THE GDR' S INTERNATIONAL POSITION IMPROVES IT MAY COME TO SUPPLANT POLAND AS THE EAST' S

" WINDOW ON THE WEST." AND THERE REMAINS, OF COURSE, THE DEEP- ROOTED FEAR, HOWEVER REMOTE THE POSSIBILITY, OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION. THE POLISH RESPONSE TO ALL OF THIS IS TO EMPHASIZE, BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS, THE INVIOABILITY OF THE PRESENT FRONTIERS, TO PROMOTE THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL STANDING OF THE GDR, AND TO ENDEAVOR TO DRAW THE GDR AS TIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE INTO THE EASTERN BLOC, BOTH MULTILATERALLY AND BILATERALLY. THUS, FOR POLAND CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE GDR ARE THE ONVERSE SIDE OF HER DIFFICULTIES AND FEARS VIS- A- VIS THE FRG AND PROVIDE SOME MEASURE OF INSURANCE THAT POLISH INTERESTS WILL BE PROTECTED. IF, AS THIS PROCESS DEVELOPS, CLOSE POLISH- GDR RELATIONS AND A COMMON POSITION ON SOME ISSUES PROVIDE SOMEWHAT GREATER LEVERAGE FOR POLAND WITH THE USSR OR LESSEN TO SOME DEGREE POLISH DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR IN MATTERS RELATED TO THE " GERMAN QUESTION," SO MUCH THE BETTER FROM POLAND' S STANDPOINT.

6. IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT POLAND ALSO SEES GENUINE BILATERAL GAINS FROM A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH HER EAST GERMAN NEIGHBOR. WITHOUT OVERSTRESSING THE POINT, THERE IS A CERTAIN COMPLEMENTARY ASPECT TO THE TWO ECONOMIES (AND EVEN TO THE RESPECTIVE NATIONAL CHARACTERS), AND THERE DOES SEEM TO BE ON THE POLISH SIDE A DESIRE TO DRAW UPON EAST GERMAN TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY IN THE FORM OF JOINT PROJECTS, AS WELL AS THROUGH TRADE. THIS APPLIES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO CONSUMER GOODS, AS WAS CLEAR IN SOME OF THE POLISH COMMENTARY ON THE GIEREK/ JAROSZEWICZ VISIT. ONE AIM, WE WERE RECENTLY TOLD BY A POLISH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, IS TO ELIMINATE SOME OF THE " DISPROPORTIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO ECONOMIES WHICH CREATED PROBLEMS AFTER THE OPENING OF THE POLISH- GDR BORDER IN 1972.

7. IT ALSO SEEMS TO BE THE CASE, AS WE REPEATEDLY HEARD LAST YEAR AFTER THE BORDER AGREEMENT WENT INTO EFFECT, THAT GIEREK HAS A GENUINE INTEREST IN PROMOTING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE POLISH AND EAST GERMAN PEOPLES. THAT IT WILL
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TAKE YEARS TO CHANGE THE FEELINGS THAT EXIST ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER IS FREELY ADMITTED HERE, BUT AN EFFORT IS BEING MADE.

8. IT WOULD BE PREMATURE AT THIS STAGE TO PRESUME A GRAND AND DETAILED DESIGN ON THE PART OF POLAND TO TRANSFORM THE POLISH- GDR RELATIONSHIP. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS A PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPING WHICH GIVES THE GDR, AFTER THE USSR, A SPECIAL POSITION IN POLISH EYES AMONG WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES.
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